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THE VAULT OF

HORROR[®]

FEATURING...



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE CRYPT-KEEPER

JOHNNY
CRAIG

IN THIS ISSUE:
E.C.'S ADAPTATION OF A STORY BY
RAY BRADBURY
AMERICA'S TOP HORROR WRITER!

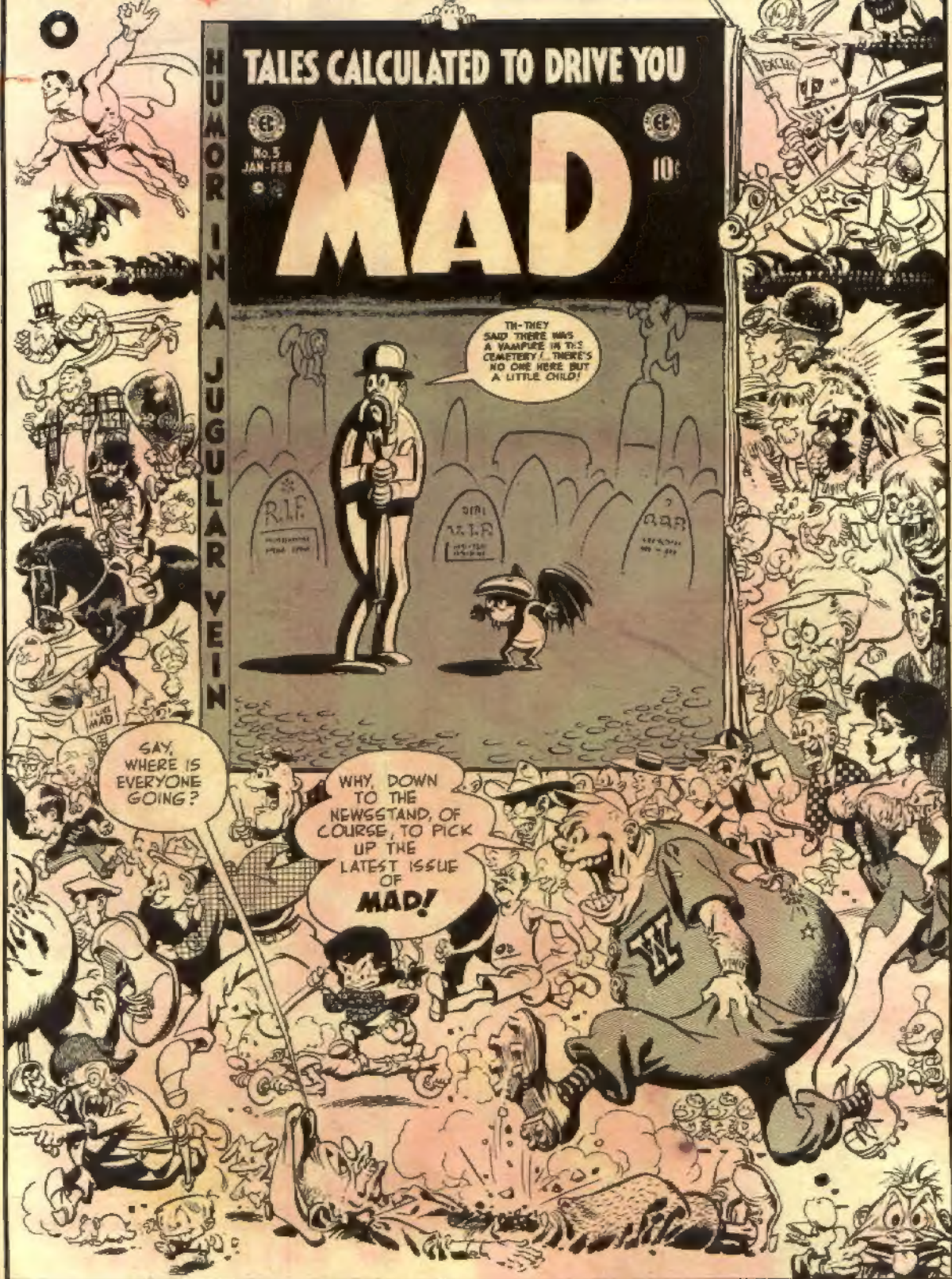
HUMOR IN A JUGULAR VEIN

TALES CALCULATED TO DRIVE YOU

No. 5
JAN-FEB
1953

MAD

10¢



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THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! WELL, IT'S TIME FOR ANOTHER *TERRIFYING* TALE FROM MY COLLECTION HERE IN THE DANK AND DISMAL *VAULT OF HORROR*...AND, AS ALWAYS, I'VE SELECTED A REAL *SINGER-PEACHY* ONE FOR YOUR *FIENDISH* PLEASURES! DO YOU BELIEVE IN *HAUNTED HOUSES*? EVER WONDER *WHY* OR *HOW* THEY GET THAT WAY? WELL, IF YOU PROMISE NOT TO BECOME *TOO* FRIGHTENED, I'LL TELL YOU! HERE IT IS...THE TALE CALLED... *THE*

MAUSOLEUM!



THE WIND HOWLED ACROSS THE BLEAK ENGLISH MOORS, WHIPPING THE MAN'S COAT-TAILS; LASHING THE ROCKY COUNTRYSIDE WITH STINGING FURY! AN ETERNAL MIST CLUNG TO THE GROUND, AND FINE SPRAY SATURATED THE AIR WITH EXCESSIVE MOISTURE! FROM BEYOND THE JAGGED CLIFFS HE COULD HEAR THE BOOMING SURF, AND HE WATCHED THE MONOTONOUS SOARING OF THE HAWKS HIGH ABOVE! HE WAS DEFINITELY PLEASED...

JIMMY
RANG

THE MAN SMILED BROADLY AND WALKED BRISKLY ALONG THE ROAD UNTIL HE ARRIVED AT THE DOOR TO THE CASTLE! HE KNOCKED...

I OWN THIS CASTLE! NAME IS WEATHERBY!

JUST THE MAN I WANT TO SEE! MAY I COME IN?

THEIR STEPS ECHOED AGAIN AND AGAIN FROM THE STONE CORRIDOR WALLS AS THE DODDERING MR. WEATHERBY LED THE WAY TO THE LIBRARY...

YES? HOW DO YOU DO? MY NAME IS MARTIN/HOWARD MARTIN! I'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO THE OWNER OF THIS CASTLE!

THIS... THIS PLACE IS MAGNIFICENT! THANK YOU, SIR! IT HAS QUITE A HISTORY! PLEASE SIT DOWN...

MR. WEATHERBY, I CAME HERE FROM THE UNITED STATES TO FIND A CASTLE JUST LIKE THIS ONE! I WANT TO BUY IT, AND YOU CAN SET THE PRICE!

I'M FLATTERED, MR. MARTIN! THAT IS, INDEED, A FINE OFFER!

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO LIVE IN A PLACE LIKE THIS! IT... IT FASCINATES ME! I'M GOING TO HAVE *EVERY BIT* OF IT TRANSPORTED TO THE STATES AND REBUILD IT JUST...

BUT, MR. MARTIN! I'M AFRAID THE CASTLE IS NOT FOR SALE!

EH? BUT WHY NOT?! I SAID I'D PAY ANYTHING YOU ASK! I WANT THIS CASTLE! PRICE IS NO OBJECT! JUST NAME IT! I'M VERY WEALTHY! I...

MR. MARTIN, THIS CASTLE HAS BEEN IN OUR FAMILY FOR CENTURIES! I'D NEVER SELL IT!

NOW, DON'T BE HASTY! THINK IT OVER! HERE'S MY CARD! IF...

I'M SORRY, MR. MARTIN! THE DECISION STANDS! THIS CASTLE IS NOT FOR SALE! GOOD-BAY!

WELL, MR. WEATHERBY, YOU HAVE MY CARD! I EXPECT TO REMAIN IN LONDON FOR A FEW MORE WEEKS, SO...

GOOD-DAY, MR. MARTIN!

SLAM

UNCLE! HAVE YOU GONE MAD?! A CHANCE LIKE THAT ONLY COMES ONCE IN A LIFE-TIME!

NEPHEW, MIND YOUR MANNERS! WHILE I'M HEAD OF THIS HOUSE, THE CASTLE SHALL STAY INTACT!

BUT YOU KNOW WE CAN'T PAY THE TAXES! WE'RE BROKE! YOU MUST SELL THE CASTLE!

NEPHEW... PLEASE! THE CASTLE WILL NOT BE SOLD!

I WON'T LET YOU DO IT! YOU'LL DIE SOON...AND ALL THE DEBTS WILL BE ON MY SHOULDERS! WHAT ABOUT ME? WHAT ABOUT ME?!

STOP! STOP SHAKING ME!

I'M NOT GOING TO ROT IN THIS CREEPY PLACE! THIS IS MY CHANCE TO GET OUT FROM UNDER, AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SPOIL IT!

NEPHEW! PLEASE! WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH...

THE BLOW SPLIT MR. WEATHERBY'S HEAD WIDE OPEN AND HE FELL HEAVILY TO THE STONE FLOOR! THE NEPHEW RELEASED HIS GRIP ON THE WEAPON AND KNELT BESIDE THE BLOOD-COVERED BODY OF THE LITTLE OLD MAN! HE RUMAGED QUICKLY THROUGH THE POCKETS...

AH! HERE IT IS! 'HOWARD MARTIN... DORCHESTER HOTEL, LONDON!'

THE YOUNG MAN LIFTED HIS UNCLE'S BODY TO HIS SHOULDERS AND CARRIED HIM OUTSIDE TO A SMALL BUILDING - THE FAMILY MAUSOLEUM!



WITH A KEY FROM THE OLD MAN'S POCKET, HE OPENED THE HUGE IRON DOORS AND BROUGHT THE CORPSE INSIDE! HE OPENED ONE OF THE ORNATE COFFINS...



QUICKLY, HE CLOSED THE COFFIN-LID AND LEFT THE MAUSOLEUM! HE MADE CERTAIN THE DOOR WAS LOCKED... THEN ENTERED THE CASTLE AND CLEANED AWAY THE ACCUSING BLOOD!



HEH, HEH, HEH! GUESS YOU COULD SAY OLD MR. WEATHERBY HAD A **SPLIT- PERSONAL- ITY!** ANYWAY THE NEPHEW TOOK ONE OF HIS UNCLE'S **HATS**, AND TOSSED IT INTO A **QUICKSAND BOG**, A SHORT WAY FROM THE CASTLE! THEN HE RACED TO THE POLICE STATION IN THE VILLAGE...



TRY TO CALM YOURSELF, MR. WEATHERBY! TELL US JUST WHAT HAPPENED!

IT'S **HORRIBLE!** MY UNCLE AND I WERE OUT WALKING... THROUGH THE **BOGS!** THEN SUDDENLY, HE TRIPPED AND FELL FROM THE PATH... **INTO THE QUICKSAND!** HE... **HE'S GONE!**

NATURALLY, THERE WAS AN INVESTIGATION! THEY TRIED GRAPPLING FOR THE BODY, BUT THEY NEVER FOUND IT! THEY ONLY FOUND THE UNCLE'S HAT...



SORRY, MR. WEATHERBY, BUT IT'S **HOPELESS!** WE HAVE TO GIVE IT UP!

...WOULDN'T HAVE GOT THE HAT, EXCEPT THAT IT WAS TOO LIGHT TO SINK!

NO BODY... NO MURDER! THE INQUEST WAS BRIEF... ..AND IN VIEW OF THE EVIDENCE, OR **LACK** OF IT... WE DECLARE CORNELIUS WEATHERBY LEGALLY **DEAD**, AND HEREBY STATE THAT THE CAUSE OF HIS DEATH WAS **ACCIDENTAL** DUE TO...



HA, HA, HA, HA!

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE VERDICT, THE NEPHEW WENT DIRECTLY TO THE DORCHESTER HOTEL ...

MR. MARTIN, I AM NATHAN WEATHERBY! MY UNCLE SAID YOU WERE INTERESTED IN PURCHASING OUR CASTLE, AND...

WEATHERBY?!
OF COURSE!
COME IN!
COME IN!



THEY TALKED FOR A LONG TIME, BUT FINALLY...

THEN IT'S SETTLED! THE ENTIRE CASTLE IS YOURS FOR \$100,000 AMERICAN MONEY! BUT REMEMBER... **NOT THE MAUSOLEUM!** THAT MUST NOT BE TOUCHED!

PRECISELY! I'LL MAKE OUT A CHECK RIGHT NOW! OH, BY THE WAY...



THE, AH, CASTLE... IT IS HAUNTED, ISN'T IT? I MEAN, AFTER ALL... OLD ENGLISH CASTLES ARE SUPPOSED TO BE...

HAUNTED?!
ER, OF COURSE!
DEFINITELY, MR. MARTIN!
WHY, I GUARANTEE IT! SIGN THE CHECK, PLEASE!



AND SO, THE CASTLE WAS TORN DOWN STONE BY STONE, SHIPPED TO AMERICA, AND THERE, STONE BY STONE, IT WAS REBUILT...



BACK IN ENGLAND, NATHAN WEATHERBY, NOW WELL-TO-DO, HAPPENED TO MEET AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE...

AYE, NATHAN! THERE'S WEIRD DOIN'S AT THE OLD CASTLE GROUNDS! IT'S GOOD YE SOLD IT WHEN YE DID!

WEIRD DOINGS AT THE CASTLE? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



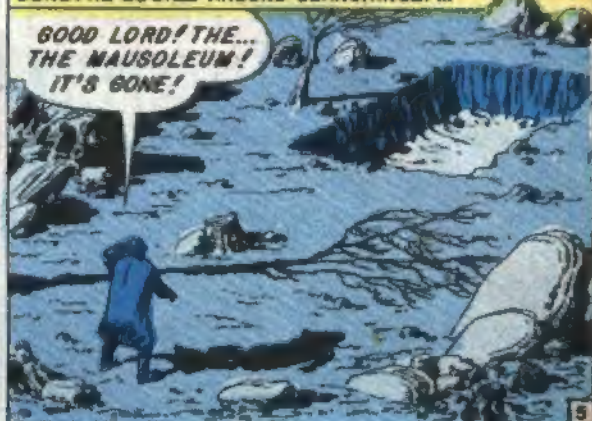
NO ONE DARES GO NEAR SINCE YE LEFT! EVERY NIGHT, THEY TELL OF THE WAILS AND AWFUL MOANIN' SOUNDS THAT COME FROM THE MAUSOLEUM!

WHA...? THE MAUSOLEUM?!
GOOD HEAVENS!
I'D BETTER INVESTIGATE!



THAT NIGHT, NATHAN STEALTHILY VISITED THE SITE OF THE OLD CASTLE! THE WIND SHRIEKED IN HIS EARS, AND THE MIST-FILLED AIR CHILLED HIM TO THE BONE! HE LOOKED AROUND SEARCHINGLY...

GOOD LORD! THE... THE MAUSOLEUM! IT'S GONE!



SEVERAL HOURS LATER, A TRANS-CONTINENTAL PLANE SPED THROUGH THE EBONY SKY TOWARD AMERICA!

BLASTED IDIOT! I DISTINCTLY TOLD HIM NOT TO TOUCH THAT MAUSOLEUM! IF ANYONE OPENS THAT COFFIN...



AND IN AMERICA, MR. MARTIN JOYFULLY CRAWLED INTO BED TO SPEND HIS FIRST NIGHT IN THE CASTLE...

AN? THIS IS THE LIFE! EH? WHAT'RE THOSE NOISES?



CURIOUS, HE SLIPPED ON A ROBE AND PEERED OUT HIS WINDOW...

SOUNDS LIKE IT'S COMING FROM THE GARDEN! I...

GOOD LORD!



SHOCKED, YET ENTRANCED, HE GLUTCHED HIS ROBE TIGHTER AS HE WATCHED THE GRISLY SIGHT THAT UNFOLDED BEFORE HIS EYES! THERE ON THE LAWN, ILLUMINATED BY THE EERIE, COLD-BLUE MOONLIGHT, A HALF-DOZEN 'CREATURES' WERE **REBUILDING THE ANCIENT MAUSOLEUM!**



THEIR BODIES WERE ROTTED AND DECAYED! SOME WERE NOTHING MORE THAN SKELETONS, AND CHUNKS OF SKIN SEEMED TO FALL FROM THEIR FRAMES AS THEY WORKED... YET EACH WAS EXCEPTIONALLY STRONG FOR THEY CARRIED THE STONE BLOCKS WITH EASE!

I... I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! IT'S... IT'S SO HORRIBLE, BUT... FASCINATING! THE CASTLE REALLY IS HAUNTED!



HE WATCHED IN AWE FOR UNTOLD HOURS AS THE SMALL BUILDING GRADUALLY TOOK SHAPE! INTO THE SMALL HOURS OF MORNING THEY WORKED... EFFICIENTLY... SILENTLY! MR. MARTIN REMAINED AWAKE AS LONG AS HE COULD... BUT FINALLY HE FELL ASLEEP BY THE WINDOW!



HE AWOKE WITH A START! THE WARM SUN STREAMED INTO THE ROOM AND THE TWITTERING OF BIRDS MET HIS EARS! THE GARDEN WAS SILENT AND DESERTED! BUT THE COMPLETED MAUSOLEUM STOOD... MUTE TESTIMONY TO THE EVENT HE HAD WITNESSED!

I... I THOUGHT I HAD BEEN DREAMING! BUT IT WAS TRUE! IT WAS TRUE!



HURRIEDLY, HE MADE FOR THE GARDEN! THE MAUSOLEUM STILL REMAINED...OMINOUS...FOR-BODING...

IT'S REAL! IT'S REAL!
HOW WONDERFUL!



HE EXAMINED THE SMALL BUILDING CAREFULLY! FRONT AND REAR... AND ALL AROUND THE GENERAL AREA!

CONFOUND IT! NOT A TRACE OF THOSE... THOSE THINGS! EVEN THE DOOR'S LOCKED! WONDER IF THEY'RE INSIDE???



BLAST IT! WHY DID I HAVE TO FALL ASLEEP WHEN I DID? I MISSED THE BEST PART!



...ONLY ONE THING TO DO! I'LL WATCH AGAIN TONIGHT! MAYBE I'LL SEE THEM ONCE MORE!



BUT MR. MARTIN WASN'T THE ONLY ONE INTERESTED IN THE MAUSOLEUM! THAT NIGHT, NATHAN WEATHERBY SCALED THE WALL SURROUNDING THE ESTATE...

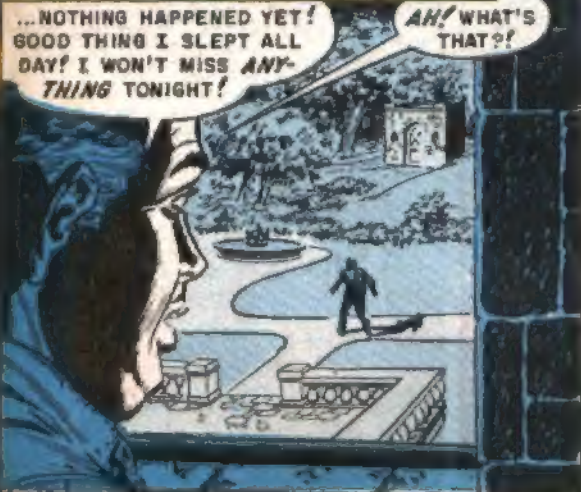
THERE'S THE CASTLE! THE MAUSOLEUM SHOULD BE RIGHT BEHIND IT!



AND IN HIS WINDOW, MR. MARTIN WATCHED...

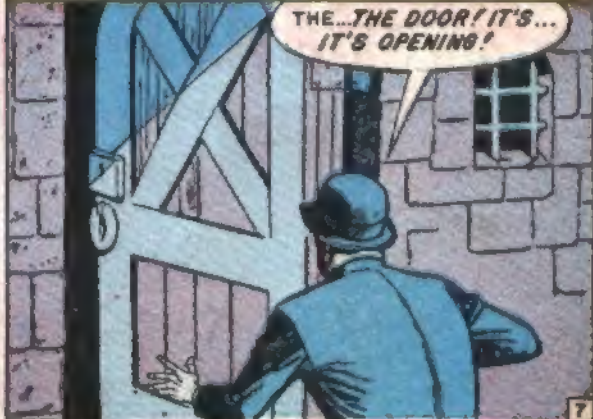
...NOTHING HAPPENED YET! GOOD THING I SLEPT ALL DAY! I WON'T MISS ANYTHING TONIGHT!

AH! WHAT'S THAT?!



UNAWARE THAT HE WAS BEING WATCHED, NATHAN FURTIVELY SNEAKED ACROSS THE LAWN TO THE MAUSOLEUM. AS HE CONFRONTED IT, HE STOPPED, HIS EYES BULGING FROM THEIR SOCKETS IN HORROR...

THE...THE DOOR! IT'S... IT'S OPENING!



TRANSFIXED IN TERROR, HE COULD NOT EVADE THE CLUTCHING, WITHERED ARM THAT EXTENDED FROM THE INKY BLACKNESS AND SNATCHED HIM INSIDE...



IMMEDIATELY, THE IRON DOOR SLAMMED SHUT! MR. MARTIN WAS INCREDULOUS, YET *EXTREMELY PLEASED*

HANG IT ALL! I SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT BINOCULARS! I WASN'T ABLE TO TELL IF THAT PERSON WAS ALIVE... OR JUST ONE OF THOSE... CREATURES!



GOOD HEAVENS! THOSE ANFUL SCREAMS! IT'S AMAZING! I...I WONDER WHAT THEY COULD BE DOING!



INSIDE THE DEPTHS OF THE MAUSOLEUM, NATHAN WAS BEING THRUST INTO AN ORNATE COFFIN! A HALF DOZEN CORPSES FORCED AND PUSHED HIM INTO THE GAPING BOX, BRUSHING ASIDE HIS FRANTIC TRIES TO FREE HIMSELF...

NO! NO! STOP! YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! STOP!



GRINNING, ROTTED FACES LEERED DOWN ON HIM! PIECES OF DECAYED FLESH AND CHUNKS OF MAGGOT-INFESTED BONE CAME OFF IN HIS HANDS AS HE STRUGGLED MIGHTILY! BUT HE FOUGHT IN VAIN! THE LID CLOSED OVER HIM AND HAMMERS NAILED A RHYTHM TO HIS DEATH CRIES!



MR. MARTIN IS EXTREMELY SATISFIED WITH HIS PURCHASE! IT TRULY IS A HAUNTED CASTLE! SO PROUD IS HE, THAT EVERY NIGHT HE INVITES GUESTS TO LISTEN TO THE AGONIZED WAILS THAT EMANATE FROM INSIDE THE MAUSOLEUM!



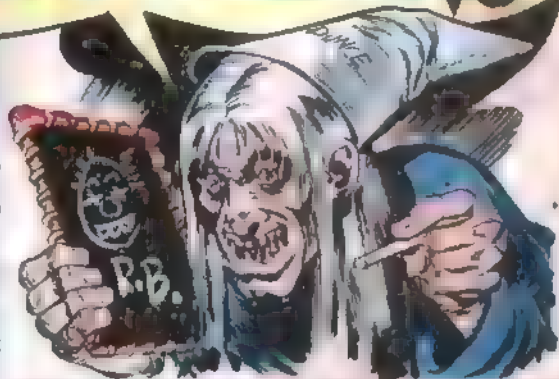
HEN, HEN! NOTHING LIKE A HAPPY ENDING! ISN'T IT SAD THAT NATHAN AND HIS UNCLE HAD THAT *SPLIT-UP*? BUT THAT'S *LIFE*! OR IS IT *DEATH*? ANYWAY, I BET NATHAN WOULD LIKE TO BLOW HIS *LID*! HIS *COFFIN-LID*, THAT IS! HEN, HEN! WELL, TIME TO GO! THE *CRYPT-KEEPER* IS CHOMPING AT THE BIT, DYING TO TELL YOU *HIS* STORY! SEE YOU SOON!



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! AND NOW IT'S MY TURN TO ENTERTAIN YOU! SO, COME IN! COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! ONCE AGAIN, YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER HAS CHOSEN A STORY ADAPTED FROM A TALE BY THAT MASTER OF HORROR AND FANTASY, RAY BRADBURY! THIS CHILLER IS ONE OF MY FAVORITES! IT'S CALLED...

LET'S PLAY POISON!

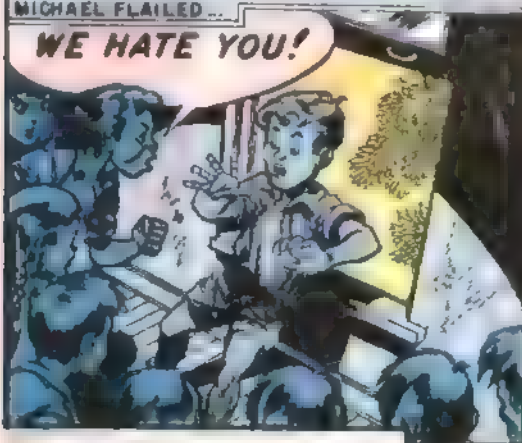


MICHAEL SCREAMED RECESS WAS OVER AND MR. HOWARD, THE TEACHER, WAS STILL ABSENT FROM THE FILLING ROOM THE SIXTEEN BOYS AND GIRLS CROWDED ABOUT MICHAEL...



THE SIXTEEN BOYS AND GIRLS, BUMPING AND GLUSTERING AND BREATHING, RAISED A WINDOW. IT WAS THREE FLIGHTS DOWN TO THE SIDEWALK. MICHAEL FLAIED...

WE HATE YOU!



MICHAEL FELL THREE FLIGHTS...

MICHAEL DIED...

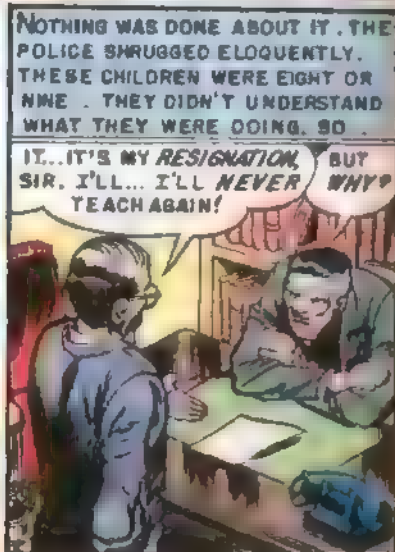
THEY TOOK HOLD OF MICHAEL AND PUSHED HIM OUT THE WINDOW. MR HOWARD, THEIR TEACHER, CAME INTO THE ROOM. SHOUTING...

WAIT A MINUTE!



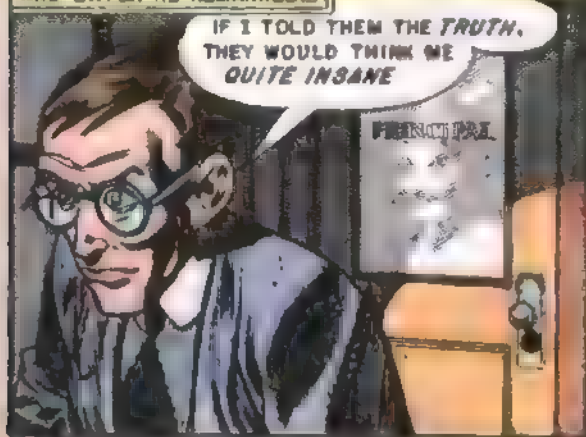
NOTHING WAS DONE ABOUT IT. THE POLICE SHRUGGED ELOQUENTLY. THESE CHILDREN WERE EIGHT OR NINE. THEY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WERE DOING. SO...

IT...IT'S MY RESIGNATION, BUT SIR, I'LL... I'LL NEVER WHY? TEACH AGAIN!



MR. HOWARD GAVE NO ANSWER. HE REMAINED SILENT AND A TERRIBLE LIGHT FILLED HIS EYES. AND LATER HE REMARKED...

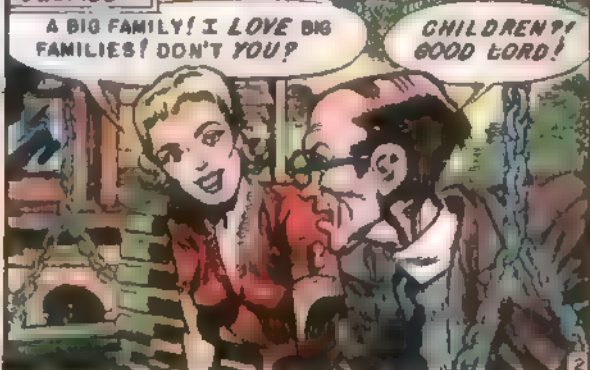
IF I TOLD THEM THE TRUTH, THEY WOULD THINK ME QUITE INSANE



MR HOWARD PACKED HIS THINGS AND WENT TO LIVE IN A SMALL NEARBY TOWN FOR SEVEN YEARS ON AN INCOME MANAGED FROM WRITING POETRY. HE NEVER MARRIED. THE FEW WOMEN HE APPROACHED ALWAYS DESIRED

A BIG FAMILY! I LOVE BIG FAMILIES! DON'T YOU?

CHILDREN?! GOOD LORD!



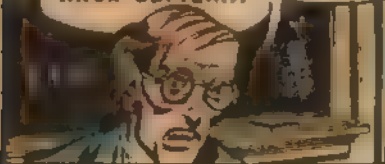
IN THE AUTUMN OF HIS SEVENTH YEAR OF SELF-ENFORCED RETIREMENT, A GOOD FRIEND OF MR. HOWARD'S, A TEACHER, FELL ILL. FOR LACK OF A PROPER SUBSTITUTE, MR. HOWARD WAS SUMMONED AND CONVINCED THAT IT WAS HIS DUTY TO TAKE OVER THE CLASS. BECAUSE HE REALIZED THE APPOINTMENT COULD LAST NO LONGER THAN A FEW WEEKS, MR. HOWARD AGREED, UNHAPPILY. ON THAT MONDAY MORNING IN SEPTEMBER, AS MR. HOWARD SLOWLY PACED THE AISLES OF THE SCHOOLROOM, HE ANNOUNCED

SOMETIMES SOMETIMES I ACTUALLY BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN ARE INVADERS FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION!



MOST OF MR. HOWARD'S WORDS RAN UNFAMILIARLY INTO THE WASHED AND UNWASHED EARS OF THE CHILDREN AROUND HIM... BUT ALL STARED AT HIM, AS IF HYPNOTIZED...

YOU ARE *ANOTHER RACE ENTIRELY*... YOUR MOTIVES, YOUR DISOBEDIENCES YOU ARE NOT *HUMAN!* YOU ARE... *CHILDREN!* THEREFORE, UNTIL SUCH TIMES AS YOU ARE *ADULTS*, YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO DEMAND *PRIVILEGES* OR QUESTION YOUR ELDERLY WHO *KNOW BETTER*...



MR. HOWARD PAUSED AND PUT HIS ELEGANT RUMP UPON THE CHAIR BEHIND THE NEAT DUST-LESS DESK...

LIVING IN A WORLD OF FANTASY... WELL, THERE'LL BE NO FANTASY *HERE!* YOU'LL SOON DISCOVER THAT A *RULER ON YOUR HAND* IS NO DREAM, NO *FAERIE FRILL*, NO *PETER PAN EXCITEMENT*...

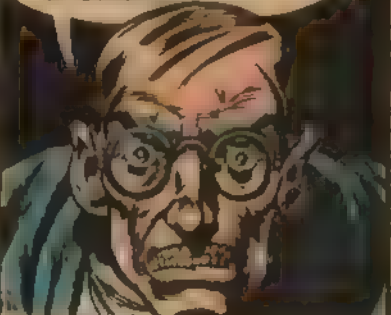


HE STOPPED, AND HIS SHINY DARK EYES WHIPPED FROM SIDE TO SIDE OF HIS SMALL AUDIENCE...

SOMETIMES... SOMETIMES I BELIEVE CHILDREN ARE LITTLE *MONSTERS* THRUST FROM HELL, BECAUSE THE DEVIL COULD NO LONGER *COPE* WITH THEM, AND I CERTAINLY BELIEVE THAT EVERYTHING SHOULD BE DONE TO *REFORM* THEIR UNGIVIL LITTLE MINDS.



HAVE I FRIGHTENED YOU? I *HAVE!* GOOD! YOU DESERVE TO BE! I WANT YOU TO KNOW WHERE WE STAND! I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU! *HERE!* WHAT ARE YOU *WHISPERING* ABOUT, BACK THERE? SOME *NEGROMANCY* OR OTHER?



A LITTLE GIRL RAISED HER HAND...

WHAT'S... *NEGROMANCY?*

WE'LL DISCUSS THAT WHEN OUR TWO YOUNG FRIENDS, MASTER ARNOLD AND MASTER BOWERS, EXPLAIN THEIR *WHISPERS!* WELL, YOUNG MEN...?



DONALD BOWERS AROSE...

WE DON'T *LIKE* YOU! THAT'S ALL WE SAID!

I LIKE FRANKNESS AND TRUTH, THANK YOU FOR YOUR HONESTY, BUT SIMULTANEOUSLY, I DO NOT *TOLERATE FLIPPANT REBELLION*. YOU'LL STAY AN HOUR AFTER SCHOOL AND WITH THE BOARDS.



AFTER SCHOOL, WALKING HOME, WITH AUTUMN LEAVES FALLING BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER HIS PASSING, MR. HOWARD CAUGHT UP WITH FOUR OF HIS STUDENTS. HE RAPPED HIS CANE SHARPLY ON THE SIDEWALK.

HERE! WHAT ARE YOU CHILDREN DOING? PLAYING POISON! EXPLAIN! WHAT YOU WERE DOING HERE WHEN I CAME UP?



THEIR TEACHER'S FACE TWISTED HE WAS CAREFULLY SARCASTIC...

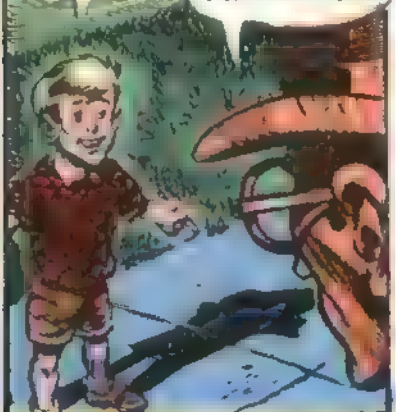
POISON!? POISON, POISON, PLAYING POISON!? WELL! AND HOW DOES ONE PLAY POISON?

WHENEVER WE COME TO A DEAD MAN, WE JUMP OVER HIM!



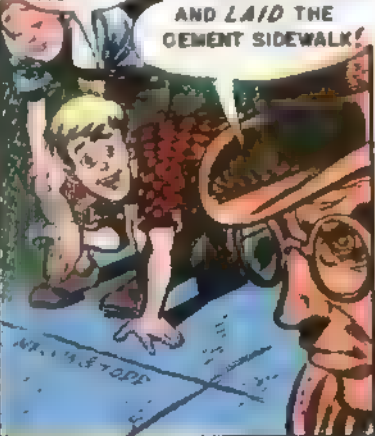
IF YOU JUMP ON A DEAD MAN'S GRAVE, THEN YOU'RE POISONED AND FALL DOWN AND DIE?

DEAD MEN... GRAVES... POISONED? WHERE DID YOU GET THIS DEAD MAN IDEA?



SEE? ON THIS SQUARE! THE NAMES OF THE TWO DEAD MEN!

RIDICULOUS! THOSE ARE THE NAMES OF THE CONTRACTORS WHO MIXED AND LAID THE CEMENT SIDEWALK!

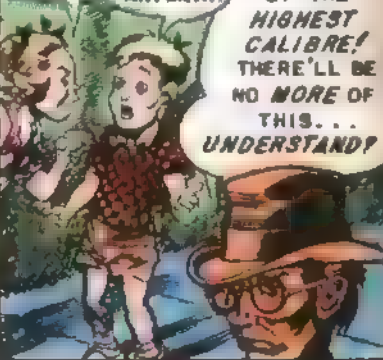


EDITH AND CLARA BOTH GASPED WILDLY AND TURNED ACCUSING EYES TO THE TWO BOYS.

YOU SAID THEY WERE GRAVE-STONES!

YEAH! THEY ARE! WELL, ALMOST, ANYWAY...

DELIBERATE LIES! FALSIFICATIONS OF THE HIGHEST CALIBRE! THERE'LL BE NO MORE OF THIS... UNDERSTAND?



MR. HOWARD SWUNG OFF DOWN THE STREET...

I HOPE A BIRD KICKS SOMETHING RIGHT SMACK ON HIS NOSE...

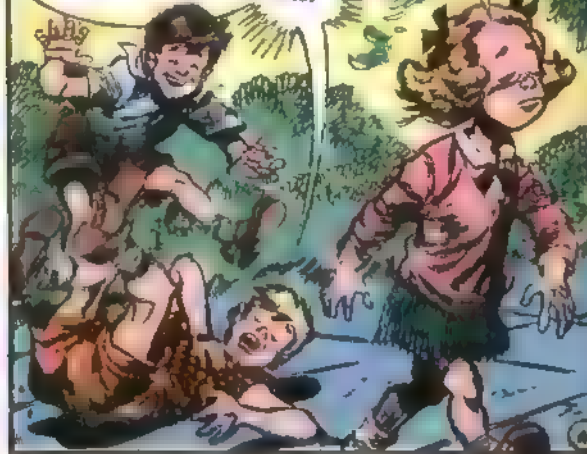
COME ON, CLARA LET'S PLAY POISON.

IT'S BEEN SPOILED! I'M GOING HOME!



I'M POISONED! LOOK! I'M POISONED! GAAHH...

OH...



SATURDAY MORNING, MR HOWARD GLANCED OUT OF HIS FRONT WINDOW AND SWORE WHEN HE SAW ISABEL MAKING CHALK MARKS ON THE SIDEWALK AND THEN HOPPING ABOUT, MAKING A MONOTONOUS SING-SONG WITH HER VOICE...

STOP THAT!



RUSHING OUT, HE ALMOST FLUNG HER TO THE PAVEMENT IN HIS EMOTION. HE GRABBED HER AND SHOOK HER VIOLENTLY AND LET HER GO AND STOOD OVER HER AND THE CHALK MARKS...

I WAS ONLY PLAYING HOPSCOTCH!

I DON'T CARE! YOU CAN'T PLAY IT HERE! YOUNG WITCH...



BENDING, HE ERASED THE CHALK MARKS WITH HIS HANDKERCHIEF, MUTTERING...

PENTAGRAMS, RHYMES AND INCANTATIONS. AND ALL LOOKING PERFECTLY INNOCENT. GOD, HOW INNOCENT! YOU LITTLE FIEND!



HE MADE AS IF TO STRIKE HER, BUT STOPPED. ISABEL RAN OFF WAILING...

GO AHEAD, YOU LITTLE FOOL. RUN AND TELL YOUR CONHORTS THAT YOU'VE FAILED. THEY WILL HAVE TO TRY SOME OTHER WAY. THEY WON'T GET AROUND ME, THEY WON'T. OH, NO...



MR. HOWARD STALKED BACK INTO THE HOUSE AND Poured HIMSELF A STIFF DRINK OF BRANDY. THE REST OF THE DAY HE HEARD THE CHILDREN PLAYING KICK-THAT-CAN, HIDE-AND-SEEK, OVER-ANNIE-OVER JACKS, TOPS, MISS... AND THE SOUND OF THE LITTLE MONSTERS IN EVERY SHRUB AND SHADOW WOULD NOT LET HIM REST...

ANOTHER WEEK OF THIS AND I'LL GO STARK, STARING, MAD! GOD IN HEAVEN, WHY WEREN'T WE ALL BORN ADULTS?



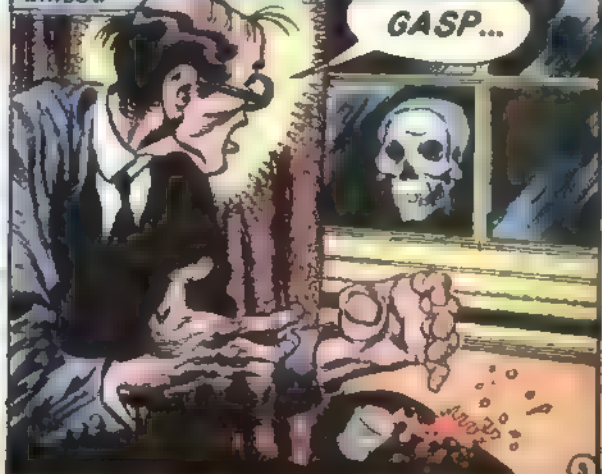
ANOTHER WEEK, THEN... AND THE HATRED GROWING BETWEEN HIM AND THE CHILDREN. THE HATE AND THE FEAR GROWING Apace...

BUT THEY WON'T TOUCH ME! THEY WON'T DARE TOUCH ME! IT'S ALL VERY SILLY, ANYHOW... AND THERE'S NOTHING TO IT. I'LL SOON BE AWAY FROM HERE, AND... THEN I'LL SOON...



SUDDENLY, THERE WAS A WHITE SKULL AT THE WINDOW

GASP...



THE DAYS GREW SHORT THE NIGHTS CAME TOO SOON. AND THEN, THEY STARTED WORKING ON THE WATER-MAIN OUTSIDE MR. HOWARD'S HOUSE...

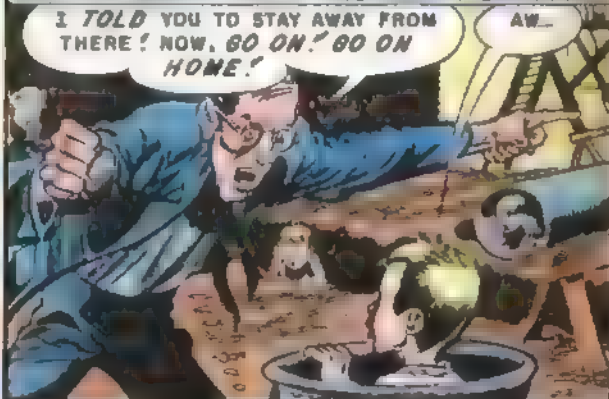
GOOD LORD! THAT'S ALL I NEEDED...



CHILDREN LOVE EXCAVATIONS, HIDING PLACES, PIPES AND CONDUITS AND TRENCHES. THEY WERE EVER ASCRAMBLE OVER AND ON AND DOWN IN AND UP OUT OF THE HOLES WHERE THE NEW PIPES WERE BEING LAID. MR. HOWARD HAD TO CONTINUALLY CHASE THEM.

I TOLD YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM THERE! NOW, GO ON! GO ON HOME!

AW...



IT WAS EIGHT O'CLOCK OF A THURSDAY EVENING. IT HAD BEEN A LONG WEEK, WITH ANGRY FLARES AND ACCUSATIONS. BUT NOW IT WAS FINISHED, THANK THE LORD, AND TOMORROW, THE WORK-MEN WOULD SHOVEL IN THE EARTH... INTO THE DEEP WATER-MAIN EXCAVATION... AND THEY'D TAMP IT DOWN AND PUT IN A NEW CEMENT SIDEWALK...

...AND THOSE HORRIBLE LITTLE BEASTS WILL GO AWAY. THEN... MAYBE...



THERE WAS A WHITE SKULL AT THE WINDOW...

GOOD LORD!



THERE COULD BE NO DOUBT THAT A BOY'S HAND HELD THE SKULL AGAINST THE GLASS... TAPPING AND MOVING IT. THERE WAS A CHILDISH TITTERING FROM OUTSIDE...

HEY, YOU?



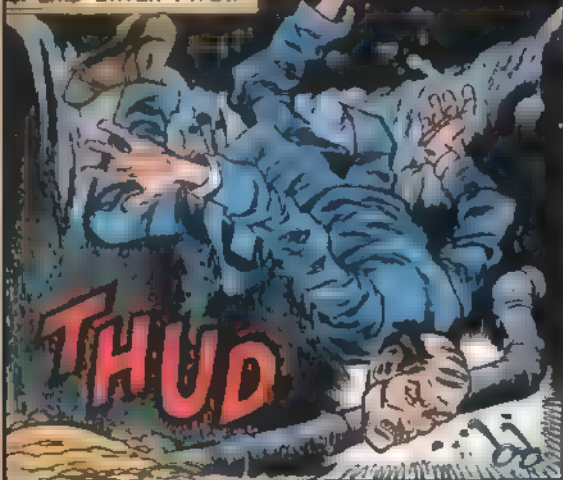
MR. HOWARD BURST FROM THE HOUSE. HE EXPLODED INTO THE MIDST OF THE THREE RUNNING BOYS. HE LEAPED AFTER THEM, SHOUTING AND YELLING...



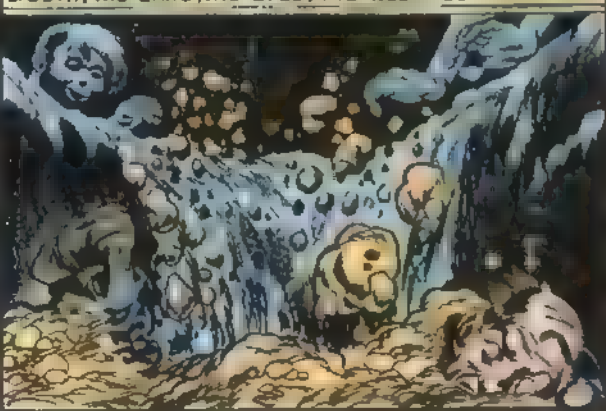
THE STREET WAS DARK, BUT HE SAW THE FIGURES DART BEYOND AND BELOW HIM. HE SAW THEM SORT OF BOUND AND COULD NOT REMEMBER THE REASON FOR THIS, UNTIL TOO LATE...



THE EARTH OPENED UNDER HIM AND HE FELL INTO THE PIT, HIS HEAD TAKING A TERRIFIC BLOW FROM A LAID WATER PIPE..



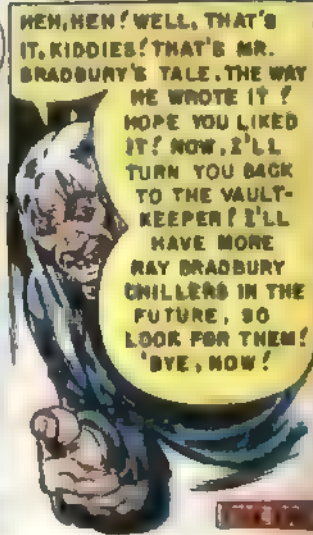
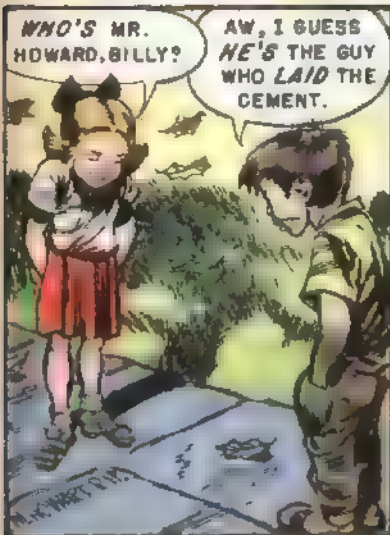
AND AS HE LOST CONSCIOUSNESS, HE HAD AN IMPRESSION OF AN AVALANCHE, SET OFF BY HIS FALL, DASCADING DOWN COOL MOIST PELLETS OF DIRT UPON HIS PANTS, HIS SHOES, UPON HIS COAT, UPON HIS SPINE, UPON THE BACK OF HIS NECK, HIS HEAD, FILLING, HIS MOUTH, HIS EARS, HIS EYES, HIS NOSTRILS.



THE NEIGHBOR LADY WITH THE EGGS WRAPPED IN A NAPKIN KNOCKED ON MR. HOWARD'S DOOR THE NEXT DAY FOR FIVE MINUTES. WHEN SHE OPENED THE DOOR, FINALLY, AND WALKED IN, SHE FOUND NOTHING BUT SPECULES OF RUG DUST FLOATING IN THE SUNNY AIR. AS SHE SAID MANY TIMES IN THE FOLLOWING YEARS...

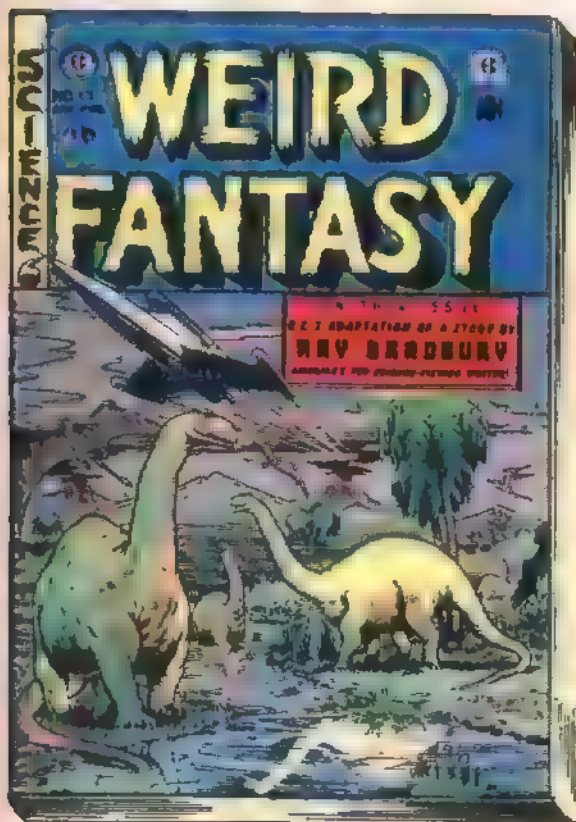


AND ADULTS, BEING WHAT THEY ARE, NEVER OBSERVANT, PAID NO ATTENTION TO THE CHILDREN PLAYING POISON IN THE FOLLOWING AUTUMNS. EVEN WHEN THE CHILDREN LEAPED OVER ONE PARTICULAR SQUARE OF CEMENT, TURNED AROUND, AND GLANCED AT THE MARKS ON IT WHICH READ...



E.C. FANS!

**WE AT E.C. ARE PROUDEST
OF OUR SCIENCE - FICTION
MAGAZINES! LOOK FOR...**



**ANOTHER
"NEW TREND"
ENTERTAINING COMIC!
ON SALE NOW
AT ALL NEWSSTANDS!**

LAST ASSIGNMENT

There was a fellow in the pressroom today ... said he was a friend of Brian Conrad, just thought he'd drop in on him. Well, I told the fellow that Conrad didn't work on the Daily Chronicle anymore! He asked for more information about Conrad's whereabouts or forwarding address. I told the fellow that Conrad had walked out of here, camera in hand, on an assignment and never bothered to come back. I knew ... I was on that assignment with him. That was five months ago!

The paper has changed a lot since then! In fact, Conrad was responsible for building up its circulation with his sensational on-the-spot photos! Remember that picture of the bloody killing in Maloney's Tavern? A taxi driver had his face blasted away with a shot-gun by a fellow hackie. Seems they had argued over a fare. Well, Conrad stood on the bar and snapped a "Bomb-sight shot" of the whole mess on the floor.

Then there was the time the police pulled that blue and bloated "floater" out of the river! The corpse's features were all distorted by the expansion of gases formed by decomposing tissue. The bullet-hole between its bulging eyes had enlarged to the size of a half-dollar. But nothing bothered Conrad! He told me the "floater's" skin peeled off in the police crew's gloves when they lifted the fish-bitten body out of the river.

I guess there's a bit of inhuman streak in all of us that allows us to be exhilarated by a vicarious sacrifice. I'd see the men in the printing room turning the front page at every angle soon as it came off the presses. One of Conrad's "gems" usually crowded the mast-head! Maybe I'm just soft ... but I've seen fellow soldiers die in a Japanese prison camp in the last war. Just before they expired, they'd creep away to a secluded part of the barracks. A man likes to die with some semblance of human dignity.

Then there was that terrible explosion at the gunpowder plant! Conrad took pics through the acrid smoke. Those poor, tormented, supplicating human torches ran out of the inferno and collapsed in charred heaps on the ground before him. Conrad always had a cast-iron stomach. Well, he talked the editor

into playing up this particular photo... real BIG!! Said it would give impetus to a new safety program for plants manufacturing explosives.

When Conrad wasn't covering suicides, stabbings, murders, and crawling under wrecked trains, his attention was occupied by lovely Erica Williams, the society editor on the Chronicle. Most people said they made a strange pair, what with her latest fashions and social teas and his penchant for violence and sensationism. It was like the mingling of her soap-and-water-goodness with developing fluid and formaldehyde.

The last time I saw Conrad, I was sipping hot coffee with him in the pressroom. We were alone and he was telling me the morbid details of all the deaths and disasters he had covered. He was grinning insidiously as he had one chill December morning when we watched a young medical student ease himself off the window ledge on the tenth floor of a mid-town hotel. The distraught youth had been despondent over flunking a physiology exam. As the boy's falling body twisted through the air between the abandoned, lifeless ledge and the hotel marquee, the early morning blasts wrapped me in an icy despair. And just as the body rebounded off the marquee, Conrad's omnipresent camera mercifully blinded me with its flashing bulb. Conrad would have been sorely disappointed if the boy had changed his mind.

Erica Williams entered the pressroom. I watched the crisp sweep of her black taffeta dress and the fluorescent lights shimmering off her matching jacket with its embroidered collar and cuffs. A little black velvet cloche hugged her carefully arranged blonde hair. Conrad greeted her with a chuck under her chin. She smiled warmly. He almost seemed human... for once. He walked Erica outside to where her convertible was parked. She was off to one of her social events. Conrad came inside again and we drank some more coffee... in silence. Then I got a tip from police headquarters... a bad head-on collision involving two cars on Main Street!

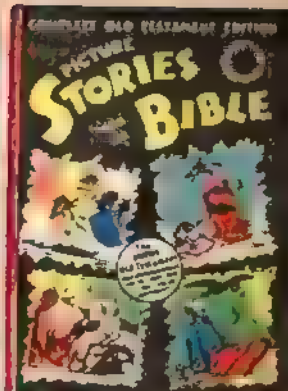
When Conrad and I arrived at the crash, spectators were pointing up at a telephone pole nearby. We pushed through the crowd. Instinctively, Conrad raised his camera, pointing it at a body that had been hurled there by the impact of the crash. The victim had been impaled beneath the chin by an iron climbing spike on the side of the pole.

Conrad lowered his camera. The victim's hair was blonde... and a little black velvet cloche held it neatly in place!



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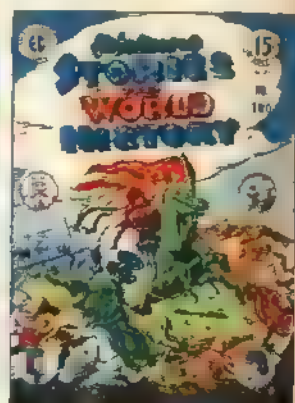


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THE VAULT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Not only did I get shafted out of 40% of my column for the annual "who-owns-what", this issue, but a late communique from the front-office informs me that my idiot editors have requested (REQUESTED! That's a laugh! They're standing next to me with hatchets!) the rest of my column for a "grave discussion," or some such rot! So before I get my head split open, here they are! Grumble... grumble!

Our eternal gratitude for your most gracious acquiescence, dear V. K.! If we may wax serious, we'd like to bring to the attention of you readers a condition existing in the comic industry which you are probably not aware of! In the past, we have always tried to make you feel that you are all a personal part of the E. C. family. We have earnestly attempted to play things straight and honest with you, and have brought our problems to you when they arose. What we have now is a very serious problem! Every few years, the comic industry "collapses!" The last big collapse was early in 1950. Several publishers went out of business, most others dropped titles, changed titles, or temporarily suspended operations. At that time, we at E.C. completely revised our line, and started from scratch with our "new trend" comics. For the last three years, you readers have been good to us! We have prospered, grown, and now publish 10 bi-monthlies. We were highly successful in horror, science-fiction, and then in war comics. Our success led to other publishers loading the stands with their horror, sci., and war comics... loading the stands to extent that in September 1952, there were over 500 different comic mags being published! An incredible total... an impossible total! Although more comic magazines are being sold today than ever before, the total sales cannot support 500 titles. So the inevitable happened! Last March, the comic industry began to collapse again under the weight of this impossible number of titles. At this writing, (early October), the field is filled with rumors of

publisher after publisher either going out of business or dropping titles! Money is being lost in great gobs by virtually everyone in comics! Why are we troubling you, our readers, with all this? Two reasons first to thank you! E.C. is a small outfit, as comic outfits go. Our capital reserve is relatively small! IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THE FAITHFUL ISSUE AFTER ISSUE BUYING HABIT OF YOU READERS, E.C. WOULD HAVE GONE DOWN THE DRAIN! For this... your loyalty and continued readership... we earnestly and sincerely thank you. As V.K. would put it, "We're all choked up!" Secondly, we are telling you all this because we want to ask a favor. There are STILL over 500 titles on the stands, and will be for some months! (It takes time to drop a title!) Thus far, although we're losing money on some of our titles, E.C. is standing firm, and we are continuing to publish all 10 magazines! The favor? Simply this. KEEP BUYING E.C. MAGAZINES! Please don't misunderstand. We don't want a single reader to spend a single dime that he needs for anything important on an E.C. mag. But if you're PLANNING to spend that dime on a comic mag, make it an E.C.! More than ever before, we need your business! We need your business to stay in business! o

Before closing, just a word about RAY BRADBURY, America's top horror and sci writer... who, as most of you probably know by now, has given E.C. permission to adapt some of his best stories. Mr. B.'s fascinating horror tale, LET'S PLAY POISON, appears in this issue. Subscriptions to any E.C. mag will set you back 75c... six issues... full year's supply... manila envelopes. Please keep writing... your letters simultaneously inspire us and keep us on our toes to give you the best! Address for mail and/or subscriptions is:

The Vault-Keeper
Room 706, Dept. 29
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STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933 AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 49, United States Code, Section 233) of VAULT OF HORROR published bi-monthly at New York, N. Y. for October 1, 1952.

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, L. L. Pub. Co. Inc., 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y., Editor, Albert B. Feldstein, 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y., Managing Editor, William M. Gaines, 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y.; Business Manager, Frank D. Lee, 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y.
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5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: (This information is required from daily, weekly, semi-weekly, and tri-weekly newspapers only)

(Signed) FRANK D. LEE, Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 5th day of September, 1952.

Ettore De Stefano, Notary Public. (My commission expires March 30, 1954.)

[SEAL]

THE VAULT-KEEPER'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!

HEH, HEH! WELL, I SEE IT'S TIME FOR ANOTHER IDIOTIC INFANTILE INSANITY... ANOTHER CHILDISH CHILLER... ANOTHER GRIM FAIRY TALE! I'VE CHOSEN A DELIGHTFUL ONE FOR YOU THIS TIME... ONE THAT OUGHT TO TICKLE YOUR RIBS! IT'S CALLED...

A Sock for Christmas



ONCE UPON A TIME LONG, LONG AGO IN A HUGE BEAUTIFUL CASTLE, THERE LIVED A KING, HIS QUEEN, AND THEIR ONLY SON, THE ROYAL PRINCE. NOW, SINCE THE YOUNG PRINCE WAS THEIR ONLY SON AND HEIR TO THE THRONE, THE ROYAL COUPLE SPOILED THE BOY! WHATEVER PRINCE TARBY, FOR THAT WAS HIS NAME, WANTED, HE RECEIVED! WHATEVER HE DID WAS NEVER WRONG! AS THE KING PUT IT,...

TARBY IS THE ROYAL PRINCE! HE CAN DO NO WRONG!

THE YOUNG PRINCE PUSHED ME INTO THE CASTLE MOAT, YOUR MAJESTY! IF HE WERE MY CHILD, I'D WHIP HIM BLACK AND BLUE FOR...





WELL, HE'S NOT YOUR CHILD! HE'S THE ROYAL PRINCE! THE ROYAL PRINCE DOES NOT GET WHIPPED! UNDERSTAND?

Y-YES, YOUR MAJESTY! THANK YOU, YOUR MAJESTY!

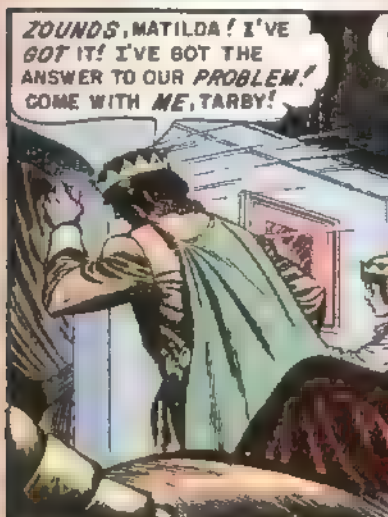
HMMPH! THE NERVE OF HIM... SUGGESTING THAT I WHIP DEAR TARBY...



WELL, IRVING! ACTUALLY, THE BOY DESERVES A WHIPPING! HE RUINED THE PRIME MINISTER'S NEW OUTFIT!

TOO BAD! IF THE PRIME MINISTER IS SO ANXIOUS TO WHIP SOMEONE, LET HIM WHIP HIS OWN CHILD...

...IT WAS TARBY WHO...



ZOUNDS, MATILDA! I'VE GOT IT! I'VE GOT THE ANSWER TO OUR PROBLEM! COME WITH ME, TARBY!

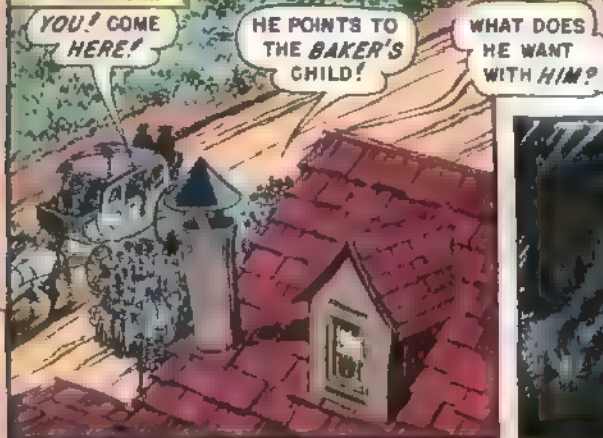
IRVING! WHERE ARE YOU GOING...

THE KING ORDERED HIS COACH! THEN, HE AND THE YOUNG PRINCE DROVE DOWN FROM THE CASTLE INTO THE PEASANT VILLAGE FAR BELOW...

MAKE WAY... MAKE WAY... IT'S THE KING! ...AND THE COACH IS STOPPING! THE PRINCE!



THE KING POKED HIS HEAD OUT OF THE COACH AND SCANNED THE SEA OF FACES BEFORE HIM! SUDDENLY, HE POINTED...



YOU! COME HERE! HE POINTS TO THE BAKER'S CHILD! WHAT DOES HE WANT WITH HIM?

THE KING STARED DOWN AT THE SMALL BOY BEFORE HIM... THEN AT PRINCE TARBY... THEN AT THE BOY AGAIN! WITH A GRUNT OF SATISFACTION, HE NODDED...

YES! VERY GOOD! VERY GOOD! WHERE IS YOUR FATHER OR MOTHER, YOU RAGAMUFFIN? I AM THE BOY'S FATHER, YOUR MAJESTY! WHAT... WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH HIM?





THE BOY IS COMING WITH ME... TO THE CASTLE! HE WILL LIVE THERE... AS PRINCE TARBY'S COMPANION!

NO! NO! HE IS MY SON! YOU CANNOT TAKE HIM FROM ME!



WOULD YOU DENY YOUR SON THE ADVANTAGES I CAN OFFER HIM? GOOD FOOD? GOOD CLOTHES? AN EDUCATION?

N-NO! BUT... BUT...

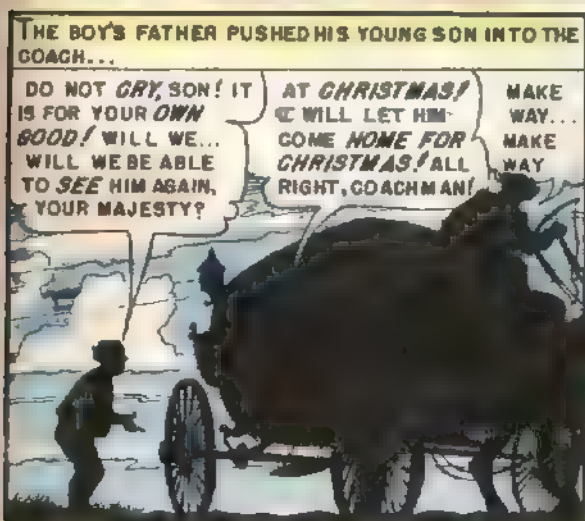


THE COACH DOOR SWUNG OPEN...

GET IN, BOY! I COMMAND YOU!

THE KING ORDERS YOU, MY SON!

NO... SOB... FATHER... SOB... NO...

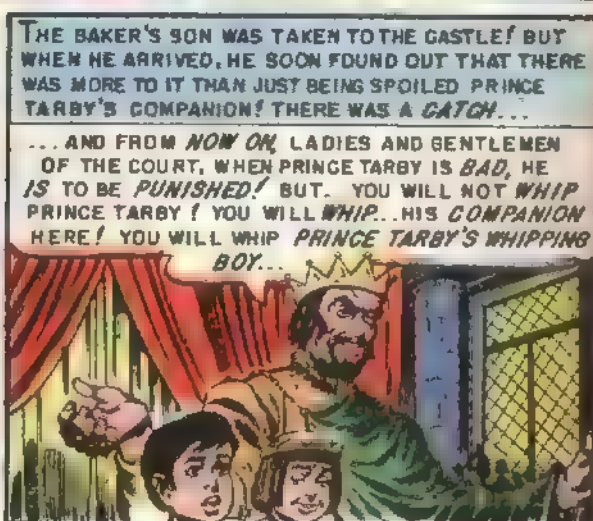


THE BOY'S FATHER PUSHED HIS YOUNG SON INTO THE COACH...

DO NOT CRY, SON! IT IS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD! WILL WE... WILL WE BE ABLE TO SEE HIM AGAIN, YOUR MAJESTY?

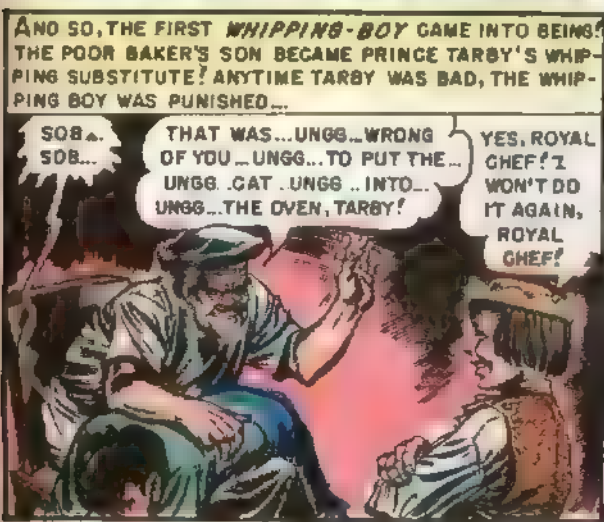
AT CHRISTMAS! I WILL LET HIM COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS! ALL RIGHT, COACHMAN!

MAKE WAY... MAKE WAY...



THE BAKER'S SON WAS TAKEN TO THE CASTLE! BUT WHEN HE ARRIVED, HE SOON FOUND OUT THAT THERE WAS MORE TO IT THAN JUST BEING SPOILED PRINCE TARBY'S COMPANION! THERE WAS A CATCH...

... AND FROM NOW ON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE COURT, WHEN PRINCE TARBY IS BAD, HE IS TO BE PUNISHED! BUT... YOU WILL NOT WHIP PRINCE TARBY! YOU WILL WHIP... HIS COMPANION HERE! YOU WILL WHIP PRINCE TARBY'S WHIPPING BOY...

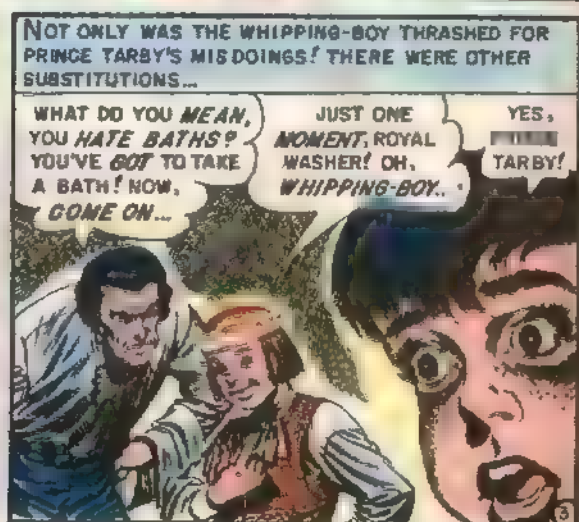


AND SO, THE FIRST WHIPPING-BOY CAME INTO BEING! THE POOR BAKER'S SON BECAME PRINCE TARBY'S WHIPPING SUBSTITUTE! ANYTIME TARBY WAS BAD, THE WHIPPING BOY WAS PUNISHED...

SOB... SOB...

THAT WAS... UNGG... WRONG OF YOU... UNGG... TO PUT THE... UNGG... CAT... UNGG... INTO... UNGG... THE OVEN, TARBY!

YES, ROYAL CHEF! I WON'T DO IT AGAIN, ROYAL CHEF!



NOT ONLY WAS THE WHIPPING-BOY THRASHED FOR PRINCE TARBY'S MISDOINGS! THERE WERE OTHER SUBSTITUTIONS...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU HATE BATHS? YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE A BATH! NOW, COME ON...

JUST ONE MOMENT, ROYAL WASHER! OH, WHIPPING-BOY...

YES, TARBY!

THE WHIPPING-BOY WAS MADE TO SUBSTITUTE FOR ALL OF THE PRINCE'S DISTASTEFUL RESPONSIBILITIES...

SPINACH IS GOOD FOR YOU! YOU MUST EAT YOUR SPINACH, PRINCE TARBIE!

YES, ROYAL DIETICIAN! ER... WHIPPING-BOY...

YOUR PLATE... CHOKED... PRINCE TARBIE.



SUMMER PASSED, AND FALL CAME TO THE KINGDOM AND WITH IT CAME...

GO TO SCHOOL? I HATE SCHOOL! THE ROYAL WHIPPING-BOY WILL ATTEND SCHOOL FOR ME, ROYAL TUTOR! ER... ROYAL WHIPPING-BOY...

YES, PRINCE TARBIE! WHEN DO I START, ROYAL TUTOR?

TOMORROW MORNING, ROYAL WHIPPING-BOY! EIGHT O'CLOCK!



AND SO, THE WHIPPING-BOY EVEN HAD TO GO TO SCHOOL FOR PRINCE TARBIE! THERE WASN'T ANYTHING THAT PRINCE TARBIE DISLIKED THAT HE HAD TO DO! THE ROYAL WHIPPING-BOY DID THEM ALL...

YOUR ROOM IS A DISGRACE, PRINCE TARBIE! TOYS ALL OVER! CLEAN IT UP!

ROYAL WHIPPING-BOY...



BUT WORST OF ALL WAS WHEN PRINCE TARBIE WAS BAD ON PURPOSE... JUST TO SEE THE WHIPPING-BOY RECEIVE THE WHIPPING...

AND... I HOPE... THIS TEACHES YOU... A LESSON... YOUNG MAN!

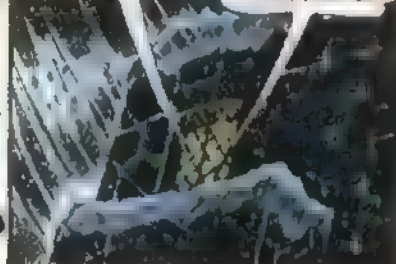
SOB... SOB...



FINALLY, WINTER DREW NEAR! THE FIRST SNOW BLANKETED THE CASTLE AND THE CASTLE GROUNDS...

IT'S ALMOST CHRISTMAS TIME, PRINCE TARBIE! SOON I WILL SEE MY MOTHER AND FATHER AGAIN...

...AND SANTA CLAUS WILL COME AND FILL MY STOCKING AND BRING ME PRESENTS!



...AND SANTA CLAUS WILL FILL MY STOCKING AND BRING ME PRESENTS!

NO, NO! LISTEN TO THE WHIPPING-BOY! DON'T YOU KNOW THAT SANTA CLAUS DOESN'T BRING THINGS TO BAD LITTLE BOYS?

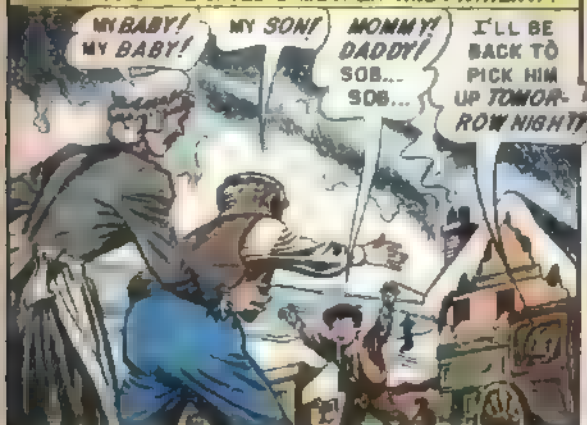


BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN BAD! I...

YOU'VE BEEN PUNISHED, HAVEN'T YOU? I'VE SEEN IT! I'VE SEEN YOU WHIPPED A DOZEN TIMES OR MORE A WEEK! ONLY BAD LITTLE BOYS GET WHIPPED! I DON'T GET WHIPPED! I'M GOOD! SANTA WILL VISIT ME... NOT YOU!



FINALLY, ON THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS, A COACH BROUGHT THE BAKER'S BOY...THE WHIPPING-BOY... DOWN FROM THE CASTLE TO THE VILLAGE FAR BELOW...TO THE CHILD'S MOTHER AND FATHER...



SOON, HE'D TOLD HIS MOTHER AND FATHER ALL ABOUT THE CASTLE AND WHY THE KING HAD BROUGHT HIM THERE...

AND SO, IF HE'S BAD, I GET WHIPPED FOR HIM! BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE ME BAD, DOES IT, FATHER MOTHER?

OF COURSE THE NOT, MY CHILD! THE DIRTY...



...THEN SANTA CLAUS WILL FILL MY STOCKING...AND HE WILL BRING ME PRESENTS!

WELL, OF COURSE, I WE, MY SON! WHY SHOULDN'T HE?

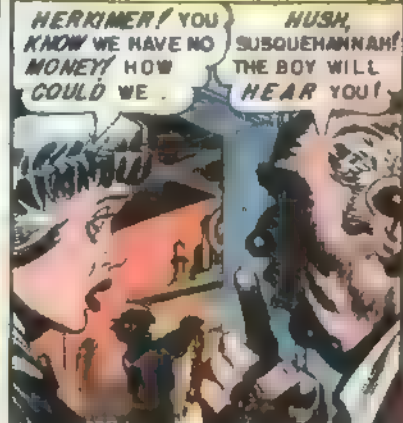
BECAUSE, PRINCE TARBY SAID SANTA WOULDN'T! HE SAID THAT BAD LITTLE BOYS GET WHIPPED, AND SINCE I GOT WHIPPED...

NEVER YOU MIND, MY SON! GO... HANG UP A STOCKING... THE BIGGEST ONE YOU CAN FIND!

AND SO, WITH TEARS OF JOY STREAMING DOWN HIS LITTLE FACE, THE ROYAL WHIPPING-BOY HUNG UP A LARGE THREADBARE STOCKING.

HERKIMER! YOU KNOW WE HAVE NO MONEY! HOW COULD WE...

HUSH, SUSQUEHANNAH! THE BOY WILL HEAR YOU!



THEN HE CLIMBED INTO HIS BED AND FELL FAST ASLEEP...A FAINT SMILE ON HIS TEAR-STAINED FACE.

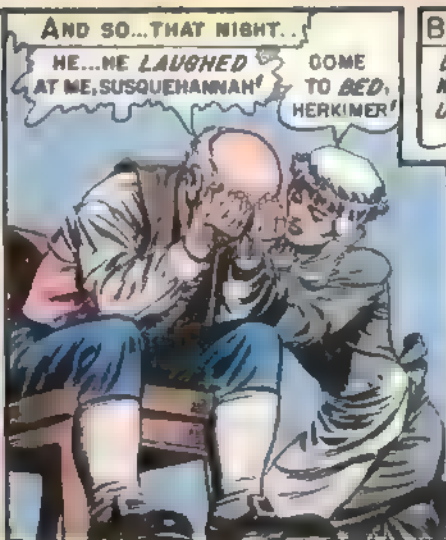
HOW COULD YOU PROMISE THE BOY, HERKIMER? YOU KNOW WE'RE BROKE! NOW WE'LL EXPECT SANTA CLAUS TO FILL HIS STOCKING AND GIVE HIM PRESENTS!

THE KING SHOULD DO IT, SUSQUEHANNAH! THE KING SHOULD DO IT! AFTER ALL THAT BOY'S BEEN THROUGH...

...HE OWES IT TO HIM! THE KING SHOULD FILL MELVIN'S STOCKING! AND I'M GOING TO ASK HIM TO...

HERKIMER! COME BACK! HE'LL LAUGH AT YOU! HE'LL LAUGH...





THE BOY SKIPPED AND DANCED AS HE LED HIS SLEEPY-EYED PARENTS TO THE PILE OF GAYLY WRAPPED PACKAGES...



WHAT DOES IT SAY, HERKIMER?

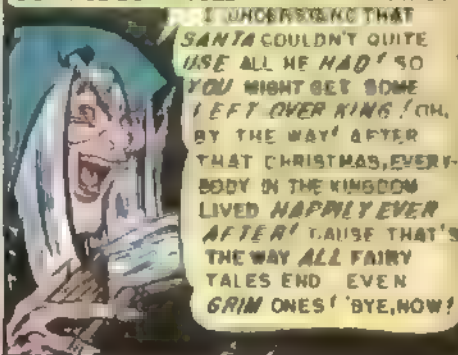
IT SAYS 'MERRY CHRISTMAS, MELVIN' SINCE YOU WERE THE PRINCE'S WHIPPING-BOY, YOU DESERVE HIS PRESENTS! AND THERE'S ONE FOR YOUR DADDY, TOO... JUST WHAT HE ASKED FOR! AND IT'S SIGNED... 'SANTA GLAUS'!

INDEED, THERE WAS A PRESENT FOR THE WHIPPING-BOY'S DADDY BUT IT WAS NOT QUITE WHAT HE'D EXPECTED! THE STOCKING, HANGING OVER THE DUSTY OLD FIRE PLACE, BULGED STRANGELY! IT WAS RED AND STICKY AND A SCARLET STREAM DRIPPED FROM THE HOLE IN ITS TOE TO THE WORN HEARTH...



GOOD LORD!

HEH, HEH! YEP, KIDDIES! MELVIN'S STOCKING WAS FILLED BY THE KING. PIECE BY PIECE! GRIM? THAT'S THE IDEA OF MY LITTLE FAIRY TALE! NOW, WHEN YOU GET UP ON CHRISTMAS MORNING AND LOOK AT WHAT YOUR STOCKING IS FILLED WITH, DON'T BE SURPRISED AT WHAT YOU FIND!

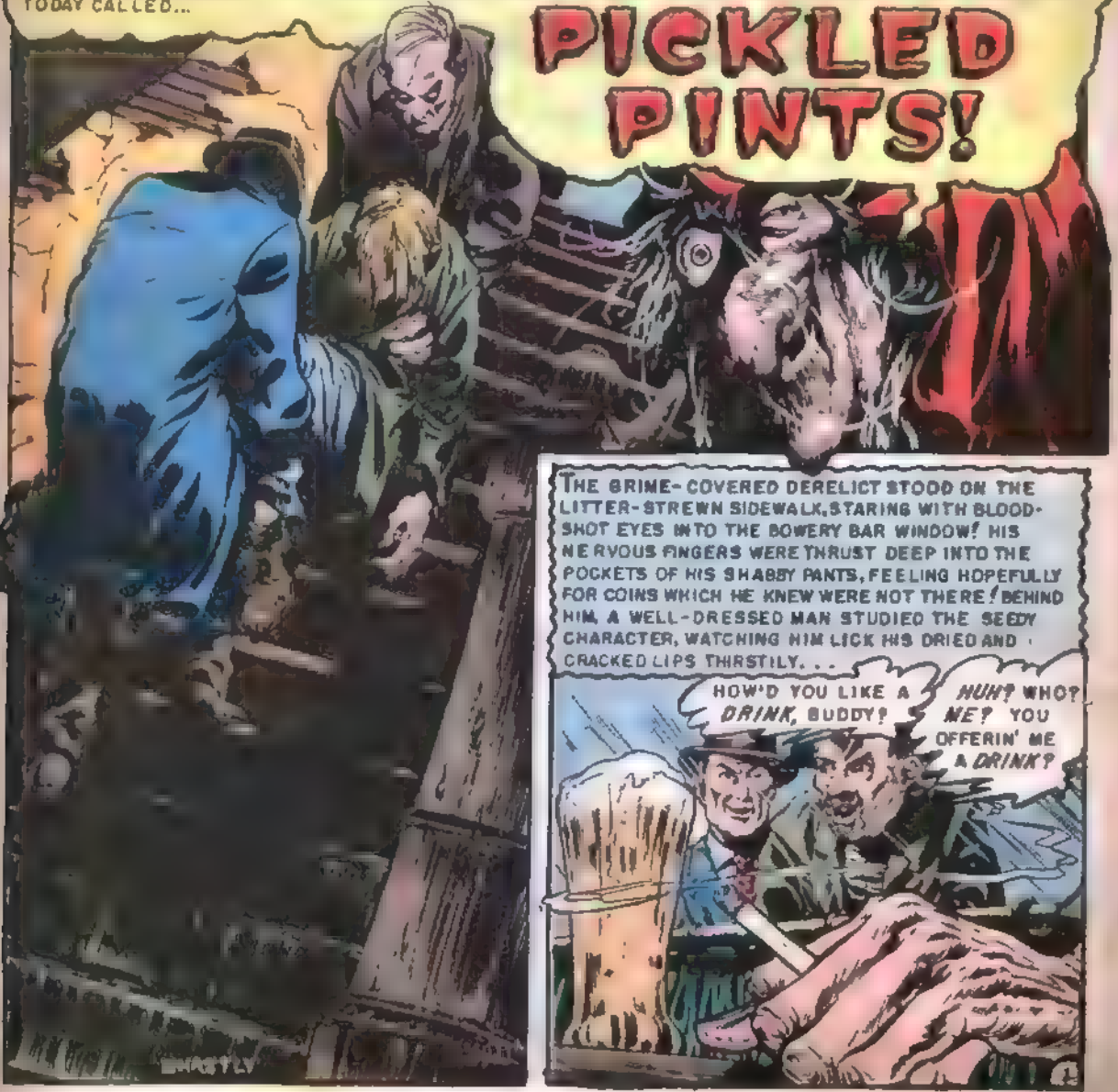


YES HERKIMER HAD WANTED THE KING TO FILL MELVIN'S STOCKING, SO SANTA HAD GIVEN HIM WHAT HE WANTED!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! GREETINGS, GHOULS! IT'S SNACK TIME IN THE HAUNT OF FEAR ONCE AGAIN! YOUR REEKING RECEIPE RUSTLER-UPPER, THE OLD WITCH, IS READY TO DISH OUT ANOTHER DELICIOUS DELIRIUM DELVING! SO COME IN .. CRAWL UP TO THE FIRE... TUCK YOUR DROOL-CUPS UNDER YOUR FLABBY CHINS ..FASTEN YOUR SLURP-SHROUDS AROUND YOUR SCRAWNY NECKS...AND I'LL SERVE YOU THE SANITY-SHATTERING SPECIAL FOR TODAY CALLED...

PICKLED PINTS!



THE GRIME-COVERED DERELICT STOOD ON THE LITTER-STREWN SIDEWALK, STARING WITH BLOOD-SHOT EYES INTO THE BOWERY BAR WINDOW! HIS NERVOUS FINGERS WERE THRUST DEEP INTO THE POCKETS OF HIS SHABBY PANTS, FEELING HOPEFULLY FOR COINS WHICH HE KNEW WERE NOT THERE! BEHIND HIM, A WELL-DRESSED MAN STUDIED THE SEEDY CHARACTER, WATCHING HIM LICK HIS DRIED AND CRACKED LIPS THIRSTILY. . .

HOW'D YOU LIKE A
DRINK, BUDDY?

HUH? WHO?
ME? YOU
OFFERIN' ME
A DRINK?

THE WELL-DRESSED MAN EDGED CLOSER TO THE DOWN-AND-OUTER.

NO! I'M NOT OFFERIN' YOU A *DRINK*! I'M OFFERIN' YOU A CHANCE T'MAKE *TEN BUCKS* SO YOU CAN *BUY YOUR OWN*!

TEN BUCKS! THAT'S A LOT OF *DOUGH*! WHAT'S THE *CATCH*?

NO CATCH! IT ONLY TAKES A *FEW MINUTES*! ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS BECOME A *BLOOD-DONOR*...

A...A...
WHAT?

BLOOD DONOR! GO TO THIS ADDRESS... DONATE A *PINT OF BLOOD*... AND THEY'LL PAY YOU *TEN BUCKS*! THERE'S *NOTHING* TO IT!

GIMME THE ADDRESS!

TEN MINUTES LATER, THE BOWERY DERELICT HAD CLIMBED THE RICKETY STAIRS OF THE ANCIENT LOFT BUILDING AND KNOCKED ON THE SCARRED AND BATTERED DOOR...

YES, SIR? WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

I... I GOT THIS ADDRESS.. FROM... FROM SOME GUY! HE SAID I COULD MAKE *TEN BUCKS* HERE IF... IF...

OH, YES! OF COURSE! YOU WANT TO DONATE A *PINT OF BLOOD*? COME IN! I'LL BE WITH YOU IN A *MOMENT*! JUST AS SOON AS I'VE FINISHED WITH *THIS GENTLEMAN*...

S-SURE! OKAY! I'LL WAIT!

ON A SOILED COT, ANOTHER POORLY-DRESSED, WHITE-FACED BOWERY CHARACTER LAY. WATCHING THE TINY STREAM OF RED LIQUID PULSATE INTO THE JAR THAT STOOD ON THE TABLE BESIDE HIM.

HELLO, JACK! EEJYUSHT *TEN BUCKS* I EVER MADE! NUSHIN' TO IT! NUSHIN' AT ALL...

NO TALKING... PLEASE!

FINALLY, THE ALCOHOL-SATURATED CHARACTER ON THE COT WAS FINISHED! HE GOT UP AND STAGGERED TOWARD THE DOOR...

HERE'S YOUR *TEN DOLLARS*, SIR! NOW *DON'T FORGET*! EAT A *GOOD MEAL* AND TAKE IT EASY TONIGHT!

YESHIR THANKSH... YESH...

HEE, HEE! NOW THERE'S A NEW RACKET, EH, KIDDIES? TEN BUCKS FOR A PINT OF BLOOD! WHY EVERYONE KNOWS THAT PRIVATE BLOOD BANKS PAY DONORS UP TO THIRTY AND FORTY DOLLARS FOR A PINT OF BLOOD! THAT IS, HEALTHY DONORS! MEN LIKE THESE DOWN-AND-OUTERS WOULD NEVER BE ALLOWED TO GIVE BLOOD TO LEGITIMATE BLOOD BANKS...



THAT NIGHT... IN THE SHABBY LOFT BUILDING OFFICE WITH THE DIRTY COT...



WELL, CAL? HOW'D WE DO TODAY? NINETEEN PINTS!



AT THIRTY BUCKS A PINT THAT'S THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY BUCKS PROFIT! HEH, HEH! NOT BAD! NOT BAD!
ONE NINETY APIECE! I'LL SAY IT ISN'T BAD... FOR A DAY'S WORK!

AND WE'RE NOT BREAKIN' ANY LAWS! IF A BUM WANTS TO SELL US SOME OF HIS BLOOD, HE'S GOT A PERFECT RIGHT TO... AND WE'VE GOT A PERFECT RIGHT TO BUY IT.

I'LL PACK THE DAYS TAKE AND YOU CAN BRING IT UPTOWN!



LATER... UPTOWN... AT A 'LEGITIMATE' BLOOD-BANK...

NINETEEN PINTS, HERB! THAT'S FIVE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY BUCKS..

BOY, YOU GUYS CERTAINLY ARE CASHIN' IN ON THOSE POOR BOOZE SLOBS DOWN-TOWN



SO WHAT!? YOU'RE MAKIN' TEN BUCKS A PINT YOURSELF, HERB! THE HOS-PITALS PAY YOU FORTY BUCKS A PINT! AND IT'S BRAVY! WE DO ALL THE WORK!

I'M NOT COMPLAININ', WARREN! I'D PAY A PRIVATE DONOR WHAT I PAY YOU! I'M NOT COMPLAININ'!



MEANWHILE, ON THE BOWERY, WORD WAS SPREADING...

TEN BUCKSH! JUSH LIKE THAT! ALL YOU DO ISH GO THERE . AN' THEY SHTICK A NEEDLE IN YOUR ARM

AN' YOU LAY THERE... AN' THEN YOU'RE FINISHED... AND THEY GIVE YOU THE DOUGH!

WHATSHA NUMBER OF THE JOINT... HUH?



IT WAS LIKE TAKING CANDY FROM BABIES, THE WAY CAL AND WARREN COLLECTED PINTS OF BLOOD FROM THE POOR DRUNKARDS, ALCOHOLICS, DERELICTS, AND OTHER UNFORTUNATES WHO HUNG AROUND THE BOWERY! AND TO THE UNFORTUNATES, IT WAS EASY MONEY...ANOTHER WEEK OF EXISTING...ANOTHER BOTTLE OR TWO...

I WANNA GIVE A PINT OF BLOOD! I... I COULD USE TH' MONEY!

DIDN'T YOU GIVE A PINT ALREADY? YOU LOOK FAMILIAR!

WHO? ME? NOT ME! MUSTA BEEN SOME OTHER GUY! NOT ME!

ALL RIGHT! LIE ON THE COT!

AND SO THEY STARTED TO COME BACK...TIME AND AGAIN...WHenever THEIR TEN DOLLARS WOULD RUN OUT...TO GIVE ANOTHER PINT...TO BUY ANOTHER QUART.

WARREN! THERE'S A BUM OUT THERE WHO'S GIVEN THREE TIMES THIS MONTH ALREADY!

SO WHAT?! IF HE WANTS TO KILL HIMSELF, IT AIN'T MY AFFAIR, IS IT? BESIDES...

...WHO'S GONNA MISS HIM WHEN HE GROAKS, ANYWAY? HUH? GO AHEAD! TAKE IT FROM HIM!

I...I... WELL, ALL RIGHT, WARREN! JUST AS YOU SAY...

THE MONEY ROLLED IN FOR WARREN AND CAL...

HE'S OUT GOLD!

TAKE AN EXTRA PINT! HE'LL NEVER KNOW...

...AND THEN...

ALL RIGHT! STAND BACK! STAND BACK! GIVE HIM AIR!

ISH TOMMY! WASH WRONG WISH 'IM?

THIS MAN IS DEAD!

HEE, HEE! SO TRAGEDY FINALLY STRUCK! ONE OF THE POOR UNFORTUNATES, WHO'D GIVEN TOO MUCH OF THE PRECIOUS FLUID THAT FLOWED THROUGH HIS VEINS, HAD DIED! NOW THE BOWERY DERELICTS WERE FRIGHTENED! CAL AND WARREN'S LITTLE OFFICE WAS EMPTY...

HOW ABOUT IT, BUDDY? TEN BUCKS.

NOT ME, MISTER! I DON'T WANT TO END UP LIKE TOMMY! ON A SLAB... IN THE MORGUE!

CAL AND WARREN BECAME DESPERATE...

WHAT'LL WE DO, WARREN? NOBODY WANTS TO GIVE BLOOD ANYMORE! THEY'RE SCARED!

THEN WE'LL GO OUT AND GET 'IM, CAL! C'MON!

AND SO, CAL AND WARREN, UNDER THE COVER OF DARKNESS, BEGAN TO SEARCH THE BACK ALLEYS AND EMPTY LOTS AROUND SKID ROW...

HERE COMES ONE NOW... HIGHER THAN A KITE!

QUIET! WAIT UNTIL HE GETS UP TO US... THEN...

CLUNK!

THEY CARRIED THEIR SHANGHAIED VICTIM BACK TO THE LOFT BUILDING...

EASY, NOW! PUT HIM ON THE COT!

I DON'T LIKE THIS, WARREN!

STOP YOUR WORRYING, CAL! HE WON'T REMEMBER IF HE CAME HERE UNDER HIS OWN STEAM OR NOT! AFTER YOU'RE THROUGH TAKING HIS BLOOD, SLIP A FIVE SPOT IN HIS POCKET! THEN WE'LL DITCH HIM...

OKAY! BUT I STILL DON'T LIKE IT!

HEE, HEE! NICE GUYS, CAL AND WARREN, EH, KIDDIES? WHEN THE DOWN-AND-OUTERS WOULDN'T COME TO *THEM*, THEY WENT OUT AND *GOT 'EM*! OF COURSE, BUSINESS WASN'T AS GOOD AS IT WAS *BEFORE*... BUT IT WAS BETTER THAN *NOTHING*...



SIX PINTS?! IS THAT ALL? WHAT'S UP, WARREN? THE BUMS RUN OUT OF BLOOD?

JUST GIVE ME THE DOUGH, HERB, AND FORGET THE CRACKS!



FINALLY ONE EVENING... AS IT WAS GROWING DARK...

ONLY ONE BUM CAME IN TODAY, WARREN!

C'MON! LET'S GO OUT AND SHANGHAI A FEW!



AND SO, IN THE GATHERING SHADOWS, WARREN AND CAL STARTED DOWN THE RICKETY STAIRS OF THE LOFT BUILDING...

HEY! LOOK! THAT DOOR... IT'S OPEN!

I NEVER KNEW ANYBODY ELSE WAS IN THIS BUILDING! HELLO IN THERE.



NO ANSWER! ONLY THE PATTERN OF TINY FEET AS A GREY SHADOW SCURRIED ACROSS THE FLOOR

WHAT'S *THAT*, WARREN? IN THAT BOX...?

LOOKS LIKE A BUM! HE'S EITHER SLEEPING OR HE'S OUT COLD!



HEY, BUDDY! HEY! WAKE UP!

HE'S SOUSED! C'MON! GIVE ME A HAND! WE CERTAINLY DIDN'T HAVE TO TRAVEL FAR FOR OUR FIRST SUCKER OF THE EVENING!



THEY LIFTED THE UNCONSCIOUS FIGURE FROM THE WOODEN BOX AND CARRIED HIM OUT OF THE LOFT AND UP THE RICKETY STAIRS TO THEIR OWN OFFICE...

UGH! THIS GUY IS HEAVY!

HE'LL BE GOOD FOR THREE PINTS AT LEAST!



BUT THEY NEVER NOTICED THE THIN LAYER OF SOIL IN THE BOTTOM OF THE BOX WHERE THEIR LATEST VICTIM HAD BEEN LYING...



AND JUST AS THE SUN SET BEYOND THE PALISADES, AS THEY PUT HIM DOWN ON THE SOILED GUT...



I'LL LOCK THE DOOR! YOU START SETTING UP THE EQUIPMENT...

OKAY!

...HE OPENED HIS EYES! HIS GLOWING RED EYES...



GASP!

HUMP S'MATTER! GOOD LORD!

HE SPRANG FROM THE GUT...HIS LIPS DRAWN BACK...REVEALING WHITE, RAZOR-SHARP FANGS...



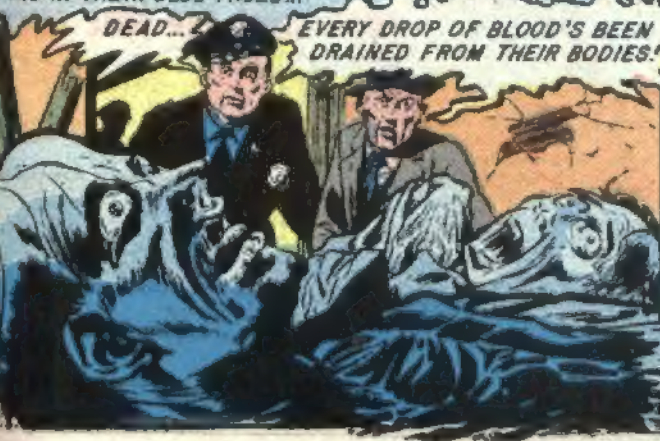
WARREN!
OH, LORD...
IT'S...A...
VAAAAAHH!

...AND THE MUSTY OLD LOFT BUILDING WAS FILLED WITH HYSTERICAL SHRIEKS AS THE VAMPIRE ATTACKED...



EEEEEEEEE'AAAAGH!

WHEN THE POLICE FINALLY CAME TO INVESTIGATE THE HORRIBLE SCREAMS THAT HAD EMANATED FROM THE EMPTY LOFT BUILDING, THEY FOUND WARREN AND CAL...THEIR EYES BULGING IN THEIR BLUE FACES...



DEAD... EVERY DROP OF BLOOD'S BEEN DRAINED FROM THEIR BODIES!

HEE, HEE! SO WARREN AND CAL, WHO'D BEEN TAKING BLOOD FROM THE POOR DERELICTS ON SKID ROW, ENDED UP WITHOUT ANY THEMSELVES! OF COURSE, THE POLICE NEVER FOUND THE VAMPIRE! AFTER ALL! WHO BELIEVES IN VAMPIRES, ANYWAY? HEE, HEE! DO YOU? BY THE WAY! I'VE GOT A LARGE WOODEN BOX HERE IN THE 'HAUNT'! I'D...ER...LIKE TO GET RID OF IT! GOT AN ADDRESS YOU'D LIKE IT SHIPPED TO? I'LL MAKE SURE IT ARRIVES JUST ABOUT SUN-DOWN! HEE, HEE! 'BYE NOW! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG, THE HAUNT OF FEAR, SO LOOK FOR US... EH?



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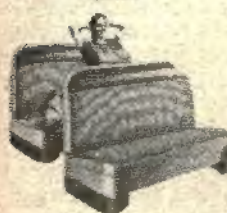
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BULLFIGHTER



BLACK EBONY

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the boys shouted at me
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"I was a SKINNY, scared, girl-shy skeleton. Now I feel and look great. Pal, do as I did, right NOW! Mail the Coupon below.

I gained 53 lbs.

of MIGHTY MUSCLE

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AS THEY DID!
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OF FUN A
DAY IS ALL
YOU NEED!

ROGER
HIRSCH
was an
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weakling
LOOK AT HIM NOW!

"They used to call me,
'SKINNY, SKINNY'"

But look
at me now
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Jowett Cham-
pion"—says
John Sill, Utah, who
like millions, mailed
me 10c and a coupon
like the one below
YOU MAIL NOW!

"This is The GREAT CHANGE You
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From a SKINNY WEAKLING to a MIGHTY
MAN. With ONE hand I can now lift
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I can bend a 1½
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muscle quality as
well as quantity."

Yours,

John Jackson Jr.

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It's wonderful! I never dreamed I
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CHEST!! powerful 17 inch ARMS!! a
small 32 inch WAIST the big 17
inch difference between my chest
and waist attracts everybody's
admiration at the beach."

Felipe Mendoza

—CALIFORNIA

MAN! aren't YOU as SICK and
TIRED as I and thousands of
MIGHTY JOWETT HE-MEN
WERE
OF
BEING
SKINNY?

Then, Come on, Pal, do as they did!
Give me 10 Pleasant Minutes a Day
and I'll give YOU a NEW HE-MAN BODY
for your OLD SKELETON FRAME.

NO! I don't care how skinny or flabby you are; if
you're a teen-ager, in your 20's or 30's or over; if you're
short or tall, or what work you do. All I want is to MAKE
YOU OVER by the SAME METHOD I turned myself from a
wreck to a Champion of Champions.

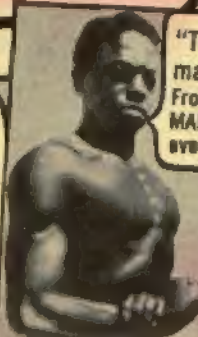
YES! You'll see INCH upon INCH of MIGHTY MUSCLE
added to YOUR ARMS. Your CHEST deepened. Your BACK
AND SHOULDERS broadened. From head to heels, you'll gain
SOLIDITY, SIZE, POWER, SPEED! You'll become an ALL-
Around, ALL-American HE-MAN, a WINNER in everything you
tackle—or my Training won't cost you one single cent!

Develop YOUR 520 MUSCLES

Gain Pounds, INCHES, FAST!

Friend, I've traveled the world. Made a LIFETIME STUDY
of every way known to develop your body. Then I devised
the BEST by TEST, my "5-WAY PROGRESSIVE POWER" the
only method that builds you 5-ways fast. You save YEARS,
DOLLARS like movie star Tom Tyler did. Like Champ Roger
Hirsch . . . Like MANY THOUSANDS like you did. SO . . .

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John Jackson
NOW!!!

John Jackson
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